

## **School IPM Outreach and Research Activities, NYS IPM Program, 2011**

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**Abstract:** Integrated pest management in schools is needed to reduce risks to children and others from both pests and the overuse of pesticides. The NYS IPM Program was involved in several outreach activities at and for schools in 2011. We organized and conducted on-site assessments of the pest management programs of four NYS school districts that are interested in being IPM Institute STAR certified or re-certified. We conducted an alternative-practices turf management demonstration project at an Albany-area school and organized 5 school IPM outreach workshops throughout the state. In 2011, NYS IPM Program staff organized a meeting of the Statewide School IPM Committee and had significant outreach concerning bed bugs in schools. We also began planning a repeat of the statewide survey of school pest management policies and practices and collaborated regionally and nationally toward the goal of having verifiable IPM in all of the nation's schools by 2015.

**Background and Justification:** Pest management in schools has received increased attention in New York State and nation-wide. This is due to the critical need to decrease pesticide use to protect our children, who, by nature of their size and developmental stage, are at greater risk than adults. Yet, at the same time, we cannot compromise the quality of pest control because pests represent an equally important health hazard. Schools are especially challenging to manage because they include such varied settings as classrooms, cafeterias, laboratories, auditoriums, theaters, playing fields, playgrounds, and gardens. These areas are heavily used for a variety of purposes, including after-hours public meetings. Visitors, staff, and students are frequently in direct contact with the lawns, athletic fields, flowers, trees, playgrounds, and buildings on the school grounds. The New York State (NYS) pesticide notification law and recently passed "Safe Playing Fields" act have resulted in additional pressure on schools to reduce pesticide use. There is a concerted nationwide effort to have verifiable IPM in all of the country's schools by 2015.

**On-site School Assessments:** Together with Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell's Entomology Department, and Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) districts, NYS IPM Program staff worked with school districts to upgrade pest management. Intensive team-based on-site assessments have been conducted over the past several years of the pest management programs of ten school districts. Six of these

districts were awarded the IPM Institute's STAR School IPM certification. These districts joined a select group of schools and daycares nationwide that have been recognized for achieving this high-level of IPM implementation. Certification lasts for three years. In 2011, IPM staff started working with three districts to become re-certified and a fourth district to become initially certified.

### **School IPM Workshops and Demonstration Projects:**

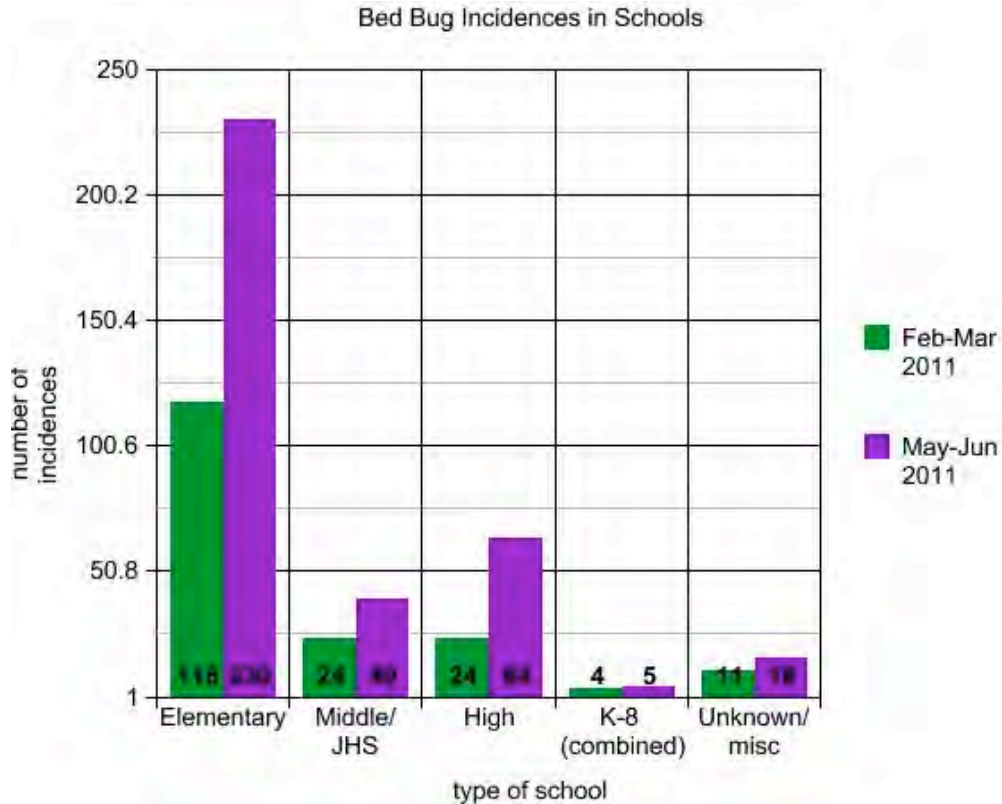
**JEN: Please add a paragraph here about the grounds demo and workshop at Bethlehem CSD.**

In 2011, preparations were made with local Cornell Cooperative Extension associations and BOCES districts for several school IPM outreach workshops that were held early in 2012 in Ontario, Tompkins, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties. Details on the results and impacts of these workshops will be included in the 2012 project report.

**Statewide School IPM Committee:** The NYS IPM Program organized a Statewide School IPM Committee in 2002. In October 2011, we held a ninth meeting of the committee with what was probably the highest attendance of any of this committee's meetings. Organizations represented included the State Senate, NYS DEC (4 people including administrative heads), State Ed. Dept., State DOH, US EPA, CCE of Albany and Rensselaer Counties, NYS Teachers Association, School Buildings and Grounds Association, Responsible Industry for a Sustainable Environment, NYS Turfgrass Assoc., and Cornell among others. Cornell's new weed scientist, Jenny Kao-Kniffin, gave a presentation on alternative weed management, and we had a site visit to view and discuss our over-seeding and alternative weed management demo at Bethlehem. Interaction at the meeting also included discussions on new state laws that restrict pesticide use on school grounds and phosphorus fertilizer on lawns and school IPM priorities/needs for NYS and the Northeast.

**Bed bugs in Schools:** The NYC Department of Education is dealing with hundreds of bed bug introductions a month. The Director of Pest Control and his Director visited our Long Island office on several occasions to bring bed bug samples for analysis of age and sex. Results are important, since less than 60% of introduced bed bugs are adult females. Analysis (see graph) revealed that schools of grades k-5(6) have three times as many bed bug introductions as schools with grades (5)6-12. The 5-6 confusion has to do with the fact that some elementary and grade schools include 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and some do not. This information underscores that resources may be better allocated at the elementary school community to improve awareness of bed bugs.

## RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF BEDBUGS FROM NYC SCHOOLS



In 2011, school nurses and health aides were a new and important audience for our outreach on bed bugs. We made presentations to over 250 nurses and health aides from throughout the state in workshops held in Monroe, Nassau, and Onondaga Counties.

**Statewide School IPM Survey:** In 2001 and partnering with the NYS Health Department and the NYS Department of Education, the NYS IPM Program surveyed all of the state's public school districts and BOCES districts concerning their pest management policies and practices. The results have been helpful in guiding school IPM outreach activities. In 2011, we began planning a repeat of the survey in order to update this important database. To be administered during 2012, the on-line survey will gather information on pest management policies and plans, food policies, educational outreach and training, frequent pests, pest management techniques, turf management techniques, pest and pesticide-related complaints and incidents, pest management costs, Neighbor Notification Law, "Safe Playing Fields" Act, and sources of information.

**Northeast School IPM Working Group:** A NYS IPM Program staff member serves as co-chair of this multi-state, USDA-funded group. In conjunction with the National School IPM Steering Committee and the other three regional working groups, we are organizing school IPM demonstration projects and state coalition projects. Funds from an EPA grant were used for school IPM outreach workshops (reported above) in New York State and for recruiting school districts in the state to participate in a nation-wide survey of asthma/IPM metrics in schools. The Working Group (WG) also has a project assessing and expanding the impact of existing K-12 IPM teaching tools throughout the

region <http://www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/school-ipm-curriculum/index.htm> . One outcome has been the first draft of a K-12 IPM Literacy Strategic Plan.

The WG's annual meeting was held in Chester, CT on Nov. 1 & 2. We had participants, either in person or calling-in, representing all 3 of the EPA Regions encompassed by the WG. Three invited speakers made special presentations. EPA's Keith Matthews described the high priority and current programming that the EPA has in school IPM at, especially, the national level. Kenny Foscue, CT DOH, explained the highly successful initiative in implementing CT's Tools for Schools IAQ program in the state. Susan Quincy, CT Dept. Energy and Environmental Protection, described her department's K-12 curriculum development in environmental studies. We visited a nearby school district, discussed the district's pest management and IAQ programs with the facilities director, and had a building walk-through. Included in the always-valuable round-table updates by meeting participants was a description by Massachusetts consultant Lynn Rose's "environmental systems management" train-the-trainer approach to implementing school IAQ.

In 2012, the WG will be developing an "environmental systems management" workbook in conjunction with asthma coalitions. The workbook will be piloted at workshops including, possibly, New York State.